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Lee's Sleuths Are On The Trail Of Tax Dodgers In State

Searching Records To Find Who Holds Intangibles

MIAMI, Jan. 15. (Special).—Intangible property—stocks, bonds, notes, cash, etc.—valued at millions of dollars is being added to Florida's tax rolls through a nationwide search of general tax and federal income tax and corporate records by State Comptroller J. M. Lee's sleuths. Already tax assessors in six counties have been given information leading to more than a quarter billion dollars worth of such property owned by nearly 200 taxpayers who have failed to file returns or who have filed insufficient returns during the past three year period. Assessments are being levied for the current year and they are being back-assessed for three years. Assessments are based at 50 per cent—because that is the way the intangible tax law reads, and the millage is 2 mills. Millage on real and personal property runs ten to thirty times that amount.

The drive was disclosed when J. N. Lummis, Jr., and James M. Owens, Jr., tax assessors for Dade and Palm Beach Counties respectively, complained about filling the assessment based on the information dug out of the records by the state comptroller's agents.

Comptroller Lee when seen here today confirmed the fact that the nationwide investigation is under way but because the sources of information are privileged and confidential under federal and state statutes he was unable to give out details at this time. "We have initiated a campaign to make present sources of revenue adequate for the needs of our state government," he said. "I am convinced that hundreds of taxpayers claiming Florida as their residence are not paying to Florida or any other state the taxes due under the law. My agents, in cooperation with officials of other states, federal officials and such agencies as have complete corporate figures available, are combing every available source of information for facts necessary to bring into the Florida treasury what is due. It's an 'all out' campaign to collect every dollar due in every county in the state because only such a campaign placed under way to a successful conclusion can the 'tax takers' from those who have been paying be kept down. We want only what is due the state and are taking pains to see that no man is required to pay a single dollar that doesn't legally and properly belong to the state or its subdivisions," Comptroller Lee concluded.

Local tax officials complain that some of these intangible tax assessments have been "upped" eight times—one example cited being a millionaire who returned considerable less than \$1,000,000 being listed for \$8,000,000 assessment by the comptroller, whose agents in fact they have secured inventories of stock and bonds held, and for which dividends are being paid worth more than \$10,000,000.

In another instance—in a smaller county, one of the smallest in the state—a taxpayer had an assessment cancelled by giving officials an affidavit that he had paid the tax in another state. Officials of the other state denied the statement so his assessment goes back on the roll for four years. One taxpayer filed a return for around \$60,000 while the dividend records showed approximately \$70,000 annual dividends. Many filed no returns at all and to avoid discovery

by Florida officials filed income tax returns in other states. One of those has been caught for a \$4,600,000 assessment.

So far the comptroller's agents have made reports from six counties—Hernando, Dade, Lee, Palm Beach, St. Johns, and Volusia. Others are busy in forty old counties with the investigation being shaped up to complete the round of the other dozen counties as rapidly as men can reach them.

Stewart Pays Qualifying Fee

TALLAHASSEE, Jan. 15 (PNS).—First among Railroad Commission candidates to step up and pay his qualifying fee, Charles M. Stewart of Manatee, gave his check for \$100 to Secretary of State R. A. Gray last week end.

"I'm in this race to win," Stewart said, "and I'm paying my qualifying fee now to show that I'm in earnest."

Stewart said he had just completed a swing around the state which has taken him into all sections and he found the situation most encouraging. A former state tag official and now a traffic officer in Manatee county, Stewart stated that he expects to resign shortly to devote his full time to the campaign. He is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. He qualified in Group 1 and will oppose Eugene Matthews of St. Marks. Other candidates who have announced in this group are former state Motor Vehicle Commissioner D. W. Findley of Macclenny and R. J. Davis of Limestone.

W. L. Standley, for 35 years an official of the Seaboard Air Line Railway and probably the best known railroad man in the state because of his active work as general counsel and public relations officer for the road, retired from active service at the end of the year.

Offices of the Florida Economic Development Council, under the personal direction of W. E. Odom of St. Petersburg, were opened in Washington last week at 1013 "H" Street N. W. The council was created by the legislature to seek new industries for Florida and to interest capital in this state.

Church Of The Holy Nativity

Rte. Frank T. Alvarez, Vicar
Woman's Club Building, Pahokee
Sunday-school, 9:30
Morning prayers and sermon, 11.

Canal Point Methodist Church

S. B. Jordan, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 a.m., J. H. Bordeaux, superintendent.
Morning worship, 11 a.m.
Young People's Training Union, 6:30 p.m.
J. W. Jones, director.
Evening worship, 7:30 p.m.
Coke practice each Monday at 8 p.m.
Mid-week prayer service, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

Canal Point Baptist Church

Church School 10:00 a. m.
Morning worship 11:
Young People's Services 6:30 p. m.

Pahokee Methodist Church

Church School 9:45 A. M. R. J. Schrader, Supt.
Morning Worship 11 A. M.

AT THE THEATRES

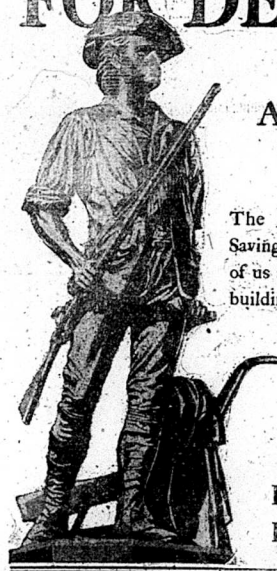


Drama of a girl with a strange love in her heart, "Ladies in Retirement" stars Ida Lupino and Louis Hayward. Playing Sun-Mon. January 18-19 at the Prince Theatre and Tuesday Jan. 20 at the Everglades Theatre.

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